

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES: WEEK 12

Plan before you shop

Shopping for groceries can be overwhelming. The task can be even more difficult when trying to provide balanced, healthy meals for your family. There are many things to think about when preparing to shop for groceries.

Know your food budget

Determine how much money you have each month for your family groceries. Your food budget includes cash and any food assistance benefits that you get such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (formerly food stamps); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Double Up Food Bucks. Take your total amount for the month and divide it by the number of times you grocery shop each month. This will give you the total amount you have available for each trip to the store.

Plan for success

Meal planning can save you time and money. It can make shopping easier and help you create healthier meals for your family. Check your pantry, fridge and freezer to see what foods you have on hand to make your menu for the week. Select recipes that have the ingredients you already have and then add the ones you don't to your grocery list.

Heading to the store without a list can cause you to make impulse buys and also forget some of the more important items that you need. You can base your grocery list on the menu that you've made for the week. Also make sure to check any coupons you have to see if there's anything you can use them for. Don't feel pressure to use a coupon for an item that your family doesn't like. Just because it's cheaper doesn't mean it's always the best choice for you.



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Did you know?

Some grocery stores will accept coupons from other retailers. Knowing which stores accept which coupons can save you time and money.



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WEEKLY RECIPE

Remember to wash your hands and prepare food safely.

Tasty Tots (serves 6)

1. Bake **5 cups of shredded sweet potatoes** on a large baking pan sprayed with a nonstick cooking spray at 350 °F for 20 minutes or until slightly tender. Do not overcook.
2. Increase oven temperature to 400 °F.
3. In a food processor or blender, purée **2½ cups of chickpeas**, including the liquid, until smooth.
4. In a medium mixing bowl, combine shredded sweet potatoes, puréed chickpeas, **½ cup fresh finely chopped green onions, 2 tablespoons**
5. **vegetable oil, ½ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon of garlic powder, ¼ teaspoon pepper, ½ teaspoon onion powder and ½ teaspoon cinnamon.** Mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 40 to 45 minutes to make tots easier to form.

Recipe adapted from United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2012, October). *Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Homes*, p. 31. Retrieved from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tastytots-homes.pdf>

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Find the entire series online at: msue.msu.edu/healthychoices

MSU Extension programming has something to offer every member of your family

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge and resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses.

To help you be healthy at every stage of life, MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to serve the needs of adults, youth and families in urban and rural communities. Programs focus on helping you gain the skills you need to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods, increase your physical activity and stretch your food dollars.

MSU Extension's children and youth programs address needs and issues from birth through age 19, providing parents with educational resources related to your child's development and giving youth the opportunity through 4-H programs to build leadership and teach practical life skills.

For more information or to join a class, contact your local MSU Extension county office or visit www.msue.msu.edu.

FIND YOUR LOCAL MSU EXTENSION COUNTY OFFICE

With a presence in every Michigan county, Extension faculty and staff members provide tools to live and work better. From a personal meeting to information online, MSU Extension educators work every day to provide the most current information when people need it to ensure success – in the workplace, at home and in the community.

To find your local county office visit msue.msu.edu/county.

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